

# How can I help the Sassafra Watershed?

*No time to volunteer? It doesn't take much to help, here are some simple steps you can take to make a difference and keep hazardous substances out of the water table. It takes all of us, whether we live on the water or not!*

## In the house:

- Never pour motor oil, paints, or chemicals down drains or sinks. These hazardous wastes should be recycled or taken to a household hazardous waste drop off site – see reverse
- Disconnect downspouts from sewer systems, direct them into a vegetated area away from building foundations
- Only connect plumbing in your home to the sanitary sewer or septic system
- Don't waste water

## Around the yard:

- Get soil tested - save money by only using the fertilizers you need
- Keep fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides off paved surfaces and out of drainage paths
- If using a fertilizer, select a slow release formula
- Do not use your hose as a broom; do not wash or sweep debris, spilled or leaked materials into storm drains
- Cover bare ground around vegetation with mulch and seed bare ground as soon as possible to reduce erosion
- Use paving materials that are porous and/or sloped toward vegetated areas
- Only repair vehicles in areas where leaks and spills cannot flow toward storm drains, creeks, streams, or better – take it to a mechanic

## In your septic system:

- Dispose of only natural waste and toilet paper in your commode
- Pump out your septic system every 5 years
- Put no additives into your septic system
- Watch for signs of system failure

## On your boat:

- Use appropriate marine sanitation device
- When using motor oil, paint, gasoline, make sure none gets in the water
- Use pump-out facilities
- Reduce your wake to lessen wave action and shoreline erosion, especially at high tide

## Household Hazardous Waste Tips

- Keep unused portions in original containers with labels intact and readable
- Store hazardous materials in a cool, dry place inaccessible to children or pets
- Use products in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and follow all safe-handling requirements
- Let used solvents and paint thinners sit for a while in a closed jar. Dirt and paints will settle to the bottom, the top portion can be reused. Actual waste for disposal will be much less.
- Offer surplus portions of products that are usable and safely packaged to others – pesticides to neighbors or nurseries, paint to theater groups
- Reduce the amount of hazardous wastes you purchase and use non-toxic alternatives when you can. If a product cannot be used for its original purpose, it should be disposed of following the methods listed in this guide.

## Non-Toxic Alternatives

Here are recipes for watershed friendly cleaning concoctions. They work, they cost pennies per gallon, and they won't harm you or the environment.

- For an all purpose cleaner: mix a cup of vinegar in a pail of water
- To disinfect, use ½ cup borax or washing soda (sodium carbonate) dissolved in a gallon of hot water
- Wash windows with 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water
- To deodorize carpets, sprinkle with baking soda – vacuum after 30 minutes
- To polish furniture, use equal parts mineral oil and lemon oil
- To clean floors, use ¼ cup white vinegar, ½ cup washing soda in 1 gallon warm water

# Quick! There's a problem on the River – who do I call?

Here's a simple chart showing who responds to what type of problem:

Problem	Who to call	Telephone Number
Fish kill or algae bloom	MDE	866-633-4686 (toll free)
Hazardous material or oil spills	MDE	866-633-4686 (toll free)
Public sewer leak/overflow		
<i>call the county or town first!</i>	Cecil County	410-996-5270
	Cecilton	410-275-2692
	Kent County	410-778-3287
	Galena	410-648-5151
	Betterton	410-348-5522
<i>if no response, call</i>	MDE	866-633-4686 (toll free)
Public water supply problem		
<i>call the county or town first!</i>	Cecil County	410-996-5270
	Cecilton	410-275-2692
	Kent County	410-778-3287
	Galena	410-648-5151
	Betterton	410-348-5522
<i>if no response, call</i>	MDE	866-633-4686 (toll free)
Sediment or wetland problem	Kent County P&Z	410-778-7475
	Cecil County Soil Cons	410-392-3138
Speeding boater	DNR Police	410-758-2890
Fishing Violation	DNR Police	410-758-2890
Violation of Critical Area regulations	Cecil County P&Z	410-996-5220
	Kent County P&Z	410-778-7473
Dumping trash in the river	DNR Police	410-758-2890
Septic breakdown	Kent County Envir. Health	410-778-1361
	Cecil County Envir. Health	410-996-5160
Disposing of hazardous waste	Kent County Public Works	410-778-7448

Also, please let the Sassafra River Association know about the emergency or other unusual situations on the watershed – please send an e:mail to [mail@sassafrasriver.org](mailto:mail@sassafrasriver.org)



Sassafras River Association

An Advocate for the Sassafra River Watershed

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